

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10424

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM SONGKHLA TO BANGKOK MAY 13

HEREWITH REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:

QTE C O N F I D E N T I A L SONGKHLA 0098

E.O. GDS

TAGS: SREF, PGOV, VN, TH

SUBJECT: REPORTS OF NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS IN SONGKHLA JAIL

1. MAY 12 EDITIONS OF BANGKOK POST AND NATION CARRIED REPORTS OF THREE NORTH VIETNAMESE NAVY TROOPS BEING HELD BY POLICE IN SONGKHLA. ACCORDING TO POLICE HERE THE THREE WHO ARRIVED SONGKHLA IN EARLY MAY AFTER BEING FIRST HELD IN PATTANI HAVE ADMITTED TO BEING VIETNAMESE MILITARY AND HAVE ASKED TO BE SENT BACK TO VIETNAM. POLICE SAY THEY ARE WAITING FOR INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AS TO WHAT TO DO WITH THE THREE MEN. FOLLOWING IS ACCOUNT OF THEIR STORY BASED ON REPORT BY A VIETNAMESE REFUGEE IN SONGKHLA CAMP WHO INTERROGATED THEM SHORTLY AFTER THEY ARRIVED IN SONGKHLA.

2. THE THREE MEN, VO XUAN HUNG, NGO TRI AN, AND VO QUOC PHU WERE ORIGINALLY ATTACHED TO THE 52ND AND 22ND NORTH VIETNAMESE REGIMENTS BASED IN HA TINH PROVINCE, NORTH VIETNAM. THEY STATED THAT ON JULY 8, 1975 THEY WERE TRANSFERRED TO A MARINE STATION ON HON KHOAI ISLAND, CAMAU PROVINCE. THEIR UNIT CONSISTED OF FOURTY MEN UNDER THE COMMAND OF A CAPTAIN. ON MARCH 8, 1977 THEY REPORTEDLY
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WENT FISHING IN A RAFT OFF THE COAST OF HON KHOAI AND WERE BLOWN OUT TO SEA BY HIGH WINDS. THEY REMAINED AT SEA FOR SEVEN DAYS UNTIL PICKED UP BY A THAI FISHING BOAT AND TAKEN TO PATTANI. THEY WERE KEPT IN PATTANI FOR FOURTY FIVE DAYS BEFORE BEING TRANSFERRED TO SONGKHLA.

3. REFUGEE CAMP LEADER TRAN VAN CHO SAYS THAT SONGKHLA POLICE

ORIGINALLY BROUGHT THE VIETNAMESE WHO WERE STILL WEARING THEIR NAVY UNIFORMS TO THE CAMP AND SEEMED PREPARED TO HAVE THEM ENTER IT AS NORMAL REFUGEES. AT THIS POINT REFUGEES TOLD POLICE THE MEN SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED IN THE CAMP AND HINTED THAT IF THEY WERE THEY MIGHT BE KILLED BY OTHER REFUGEES. SEVERAL REFUGEES FROM PHU QUOC CLAIMED TO RECOGNIZE THE THREE MEN AS "BO DOI". THE THREE MEN WERE THEN TAKEN TO THE SONGKHLA POLICE STATION WHERE THEY REMAIN.

4. MAY 12 NATION STORY SAYS REFUGEES IN SONGKHLA HAVE ACCUSED THE THREE MEN OF "SECRETLY SUPPLYING AMMUNITION AND WEAPONS" TO TERRORISTS IN THAILAND. ALTHOUGH CAMP LEADER AND OTHERS ARE VERY SUSPICIOUS OF THE INTENTIONS OF THE THREE MEN, THEY ADMIT THEY HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT SUCH ACCUSATIONS NOR DID ANYTHING LINKING THEM TO THAI INSURGENTS COME OUT IN THE COURSE OF INTER-ROGATION.

HAMILTON UNQTE
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